VERGARA: PROUD TO BE A COLOMBIAN **TELEVISION** {page 15}

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GETTY IMAGES

The holiday party ... it's *baaaack!*

After two gloomy years, city party planners reporting a welcome 25 percent spike in bookings for workplace shindigs

{page 02}

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Lavish office party makes a comeback

After years-long drought, bashes are again being planned Rejoice! Open bars are making a comeback, but companies skimp elsewhere

Get ready to see your coworker in a compromising position: Though holiday parties remain in a slump nationwide, city venues are lining up the shot glasses.

"We definitely have seen a change this year," said Laura Altman, an executive at Bowlmor Lanes. "People aren't really holding back."

Take Conde Nast, for instance: After a three-year recession drought, the publisher heralded the return of its lavish holiday luncheon at the Four Seasons.

Still, the reveling is nowhere near pre-recession levels — no polar bear requests, Sarah Pease of Brilliant Event Planning joked. She cited one company's $300,000 party budget as rather low compared with previous years.

New York is bucking a dismal trend going on elsewhere in the country. Crain's reported that the number of companies nationwide hosting holiday bashes has reached its lowest point in recent years.

Yet venues like Gotham Hall and Trump SoHo reported bumps in bookings. At Bowlmor Lanes, party reservations are up 25 percent, and their calendar filled up a month ago. Last year, money-cautious companies waited until December to commit, Altman said.

"People have more money," she said. "People definitely aren't as budget-conscious this year."

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EYECANDY IMAGES

▶ Dust off those crustaceans and make some holiday cheer!

Trimming — not just for trees

Even as they bring back six-figure events, some hosts still trim the budget.

- "People are definitely bargain shopping," said Mario Stewart, president of event planning company EMRG Media.
- Some Trump SoHo partiers opt for an iPod instead of a DJ, a spokeswoman said.
- One client bartered radio ads for a discount, Stewart said. Another got a half-price deal by booking on a Thursday afternoon, instead of an evening.
- "They basically got a party that might be valued at $15,000 for maybe half the price," he said.

"It's OK to book a holiday party now."
LAURA ALTMAN, VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES AT BOWLMOR LANES

"Last year, if anyone did it, it was so tight to the bone."
MAYA KALMAN, EVENT PLANNER

"I definitely see a spike."
MARIO STEWART, PRESIDENT OF AN EVENT-PLANNING COMPANY

In the news

Council preps to sue mayor

The City Council is gearing up for a fight with Mayor Michael Bloomberg. Members passed a resolution yesterday allowing them to sue the Dept. of Homeless Services regarding a requirement that requires shelter seekers prove they have nowhere else to live. METRO/AB

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ONLINE TODAY

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GIFT GUIDE FOR SHOPPING SLACKERS

WWW.METRO.US/MIXTAPE
'HIDDEN TREASURES' OF WINEHOUSE

WWW.METRO.US/MEOW
KE$HA IS FOR THE DOGS

City: Parks employee made off with $70,000

NEW YORK. A Parks and Recreation employee was charged with illegally collecting more than $70,000 in workers' compensation benefits from the city. According to the Department of Investigation, Cosmo Zingaropoli, 38, said he could not work after he was injured on the job. But as he received workers' compensation checks, he was in fact working, the DOI said, installing fireplaces. METRO/AB

▶ Park51 is safe — for now.

Park51 safe from eviction

FINANCIAL DISTRICT. A Manhattan judge has granted an injunction that prevents Con Ed from evicting Park51 — for now. Con Ed, Park51's landlord, retroactively raised the rent from $2,750 a month to $47,437, and then tried to evict the controversial community center and mosque when they didn't cough up the dough. However, the judge did order that Park51 must pay back rent as well as begin paying an increased rent of $25,875 per month. METRO/EAE

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Curbside haikus make their crosswalk debut

Spot the signs

The haiku signs will be up at the following areas:

1. Bronx Zoo/New York Botanic Garden, Bronx
2. Grand Concourse/Bronx Museum, Bronx
3. The Hub, Bronx
4. Studio Museum/Central Harlem
5. Municipal Arts Society/Museum of Art and Design
6. MoMA/International Center of Photography
7. Flushing, Queens
8. PS 1, Queens
9. Jamaica, Queens
10. Downtown Brooklyn
11. Brooklyn Museum/Brooklyn Botanical Garden
12. St. George, Staten Island

City unveils poetry yesterday for pedestrians, drivers and bikers alike ◗ DOT hopes haikus will curb accidents ◗ Installed at high-crash intersections

The Department of Transportation thinks a little poetry could go a long way in making New York City streets safer.

Twelve signs featuring artwork and haikus by artist John Morse will be installed at a dozen high-crash locations across the boroughs for the new "Curbside Haiku" safety campaign that was announced yesterday.

Paid for by a state grant and installed through DOT's Urban Art Program, the artwork and poetry will appear on light poles and at public parking lots around the city until next fall.

Cyclist writes screenplay
Plot features bike lane drama
How pedestrian

Each sign focuses on one transportation mode, like bike riding or driving, in order to make New Yorkers more sensitive to their whereabouts.

"Curbside Haiku seeks to merge public art with public awareness to infuse a bit of beauty and joy into the public sphere," said John Morse. "I'm aiming to engage, edify and inform — and nothing does that better than art."

In the next week and a half, 216 of the signs will decorate the city's intersections. Two of the haikus are in Spanish.

EMILY ANNE EPSTEIN
emily.epstein@metro.us

DOT

Cars crossing sidewalk: Worst New York City hotspot To run into friends

"These signs complement our engineering and education efforts to create a steady rhythm for safer streets in all five boroughs." DOT COMMISSIONER SADIK-KHAN

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Who really won huge Powerball jackpot?

Friend claims Greenwich trio are not the real mega winners Report says they collected cash for a client who wanted to avoid publicity

CONNECTICUT LOTTERY

▶ From left: Tim Davidson, Greg Skidmore and Brandon Lacoff, second from right, pose with the winnings.

That $254 million lottery win by three Connecticut wealth managers might not be what it seems.

Thomas Gladstone, who owns the building where alleged winners Gregg Skidmore, Brandon Lacoff and Tim Davidson all work, told London's Daily Mail newspaper that one of the men said they did not purchase the winning ticket — and instead were collecting the money for a client.

"We are just representing the guy," the Daily Mail reported that Lacoff told Gladstone.

An anonymous client was the real winner, according to the Daily Mail, but he asked the wealth managers to accept the money on his behalf so he did not have to enter the spotlight.

And the alleged real winner plans to donate some money to charity, as the trio promised Monday — but will keep a large portion of it for himself.

The three winners posed with a check for $254.2 million Monday, and their lawyer said they would take home $103,586,824.51 after taxes.

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alison.bowen@metro.us

Invalid ticket?

NEW YORK. Powerball rules require the winner's name to be disclosed; and typically, after a big win, the winners pose with a large cardboard check and tell the public what they plan to do with the money. A spokeswoman for the Connecticut Lottery said yesterday that it is not uncommon for Powerball winners to be identified as individuals, trusts, partnerships or other legal entities. METRO

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Obama, tree ignite traffic jam

Obama to tour city in fundraising swing today Avoid Midtown on the 'biggest gridlock of the decade'

SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

▶ The 74-foot Norway Spruce is lowered at Rockefeller Center.

Expect a Midtown melee today as President Barack Obama's visit to town and the lighting of the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree coincide.

President Obama will be in the Big Apple for a series of fundraisers today, including one at the Sheraton Hotel on Seventh Avenue — just a few blocks over from the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree ceremony.

Sam Schwartz, a New York City traffic expert, says that the POTUS and the spruce tree will bring Manhattan to an "absolute standstill" during the "biggest gridlock alert day of the decade."

Thousands are expected to attend the Rockefeller tree lighting at 9 p.m.

Fifth and Sixth Avenues from 48th Street to 52nd Street will be closed for the commotion from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Michael Buble, Faith Hill, Carol King and Cee Lo Green are expected to perform live at the lighting. Contrary to rumors flying yesterday, Justin Bieber will not be performing live; the ceremony will include a pre-recorded concert by the Biebs.

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Let there be lights

NEW YORK. Rockefeller Center's 74-foot Christmas tree will light up at 8:55 p.m. tonight. Spectators can head over to Fifth Avenue between 49th and 50th Street before 7 p.m. to watch the two-hour ceremony.

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Bribe arrest take two for Brooklyn pol

State Assemblyman William Boyland Jr. was charged yesterday with allegedly soliciting $250,000 in bribes from undercover FBI agents and auctioning off his Assembly seat.

The agents posed as associates of a carnival operator seeking locations to set up shop in his Brownsville-Bedford Stuyvesant district, as well as real estate developers.

Boyland, who comes from a prominent Brooklyn political family, just beat similar charges earlier this month.

In the new complaint, the FBI alleges that Boyland promised to help secure business opportunities and use his political influence in exchange for cash.

"The extent of the charged corruption is staggering," said United States Attorney Loretta Lynch. "[He] is alleged to have auctioned the power of his seat to the highest bidder."

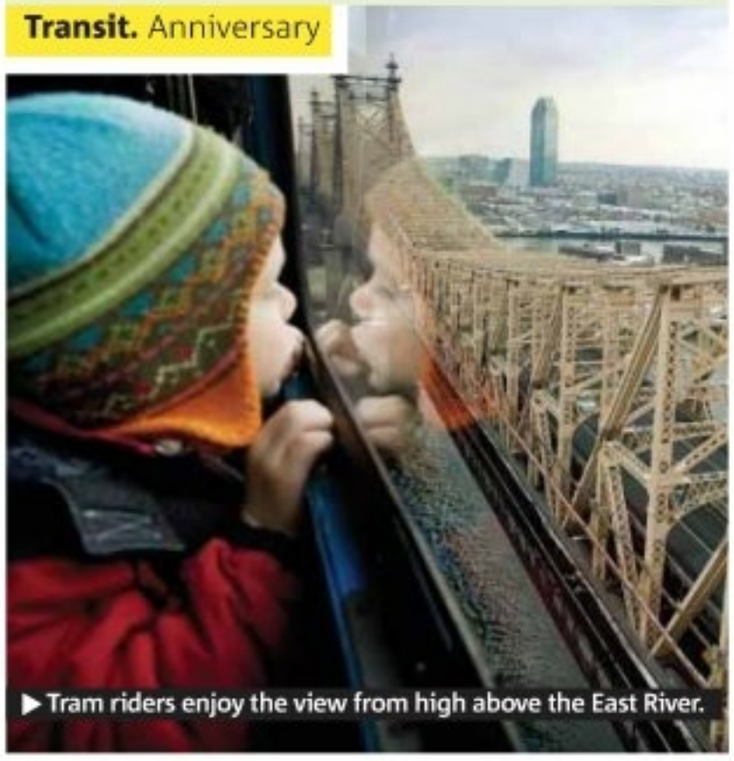
Deja vu?

Boyland was acquitted on Nov. 10 of charges that he conspired to take bribes from MediSys, which runs hospitals in Queens and Brooklyn.

EMILY ANNE EPSTEIN
emily.epstein@metro.us

EMILY ANNE EPSTEIN/METRO

Transit. Anniversary



▶ Tram riders enjoy the view from high above the East River.

Riding high above river

Today marks the one-year anniversary of the new Roosevelt Island tram. The revamped tram system opened Nov. 30, 2010. It was shut down in 2009 for a nine-month overhaul following a history where 69 people were trapped aboard for hours in 2006. Ridership on the new tram, outfitted with electrical and mechanical backup, is expected to exceed 2 million this year — up 13 percent from last year. METRO/CB

JLo Fiat ad blasted for appropriating graffiti

BRONX. A group of Bronx graffiti artists are decrying JLo's recent ad campaign. Members of TATS Cru say the pop megastar is featured in a Fiat car commercial that uses their street art without their permission, according to the New York Post.

The ad shows Lopez driving around what's supposed to be the Bronx, but is actually L.A. It features a replica of a mural under the 6 train that reads: "I [Heart] Bronx."

"Everyone started congratulating us on the commercial and we're like, what commercial?"
WILFREDO FELICIANO OF TATS CRU

Judge calls on Harlem to do more

HARLEM. A Manhattan Supreme Court judge called on everyday residents in Harlem to do more to stamp out violence as he sentenced five young gangbangers to jail yesterday. "I did not wish to see another grieving parent or sibling. ... Wakes and funerals for young people did not have to be a fact of life," said Justice Edward McLaughlin. "Hasn't the time come to find the guns in your homes?" METRO/CB

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Campaign crumbling for Cain

Republican presidential contender Herman Cain told aides yesterday he would reassess the viability of his struggling campaign after an Atlanta woman accused him of conducting a 13-year extramarital affair.

The allegations could be the end of the political line for Cain, who led the Republican White House race barely more than a month ago but has nosedived in polls after a series of sexual harassment charges and campaign missteps.

Cain denies he had an affair with businesswoman Ginger White, who told an Atlanta television station that her on-and-off relationship with Cain began in the mid-1990s.

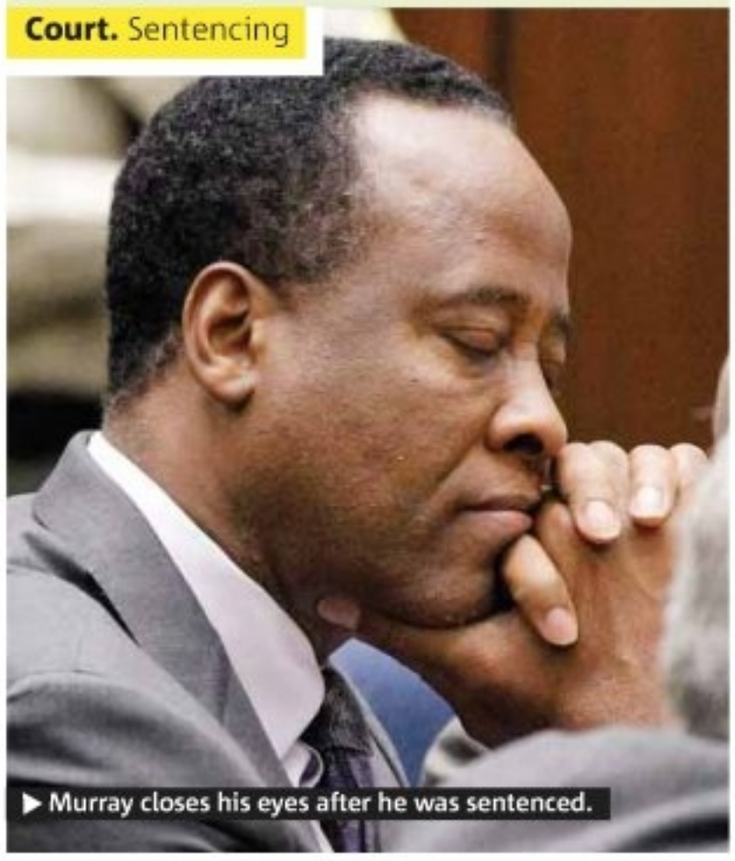
"The public will have to decide whether they believe her or whether they believe me."
CAIN

The former pizza executive told aides that he would gauge the impact of the charges over the next few days and see if it created a cloud of doubt in supporters' minds.

"Obviously, this is cause for reassessment," Cain told staff members, adding he would continue his campaign schedule over the next few days. **REUTERS**

MARIO ANZUONI-POOL/GETTY IMAGES

Court. Sentencing



▶ Murray closes his eyes after he was sentenced.

Jackson doc: Four years

Dr. Conrad Murray was sentenced yesterday to four years in jail and was denied probation for conviction on a charge of involuntary manslaughter in pop star Michael Jackson's death. He may spend only months behind bars due to extreme overcrowding. REUTERS

Iranian protesters storm diplomatic compounds

TEHRAN. Iranian protesters stormed two British diplomatic compounds in Tehran yesterday, smashing windows, torching a car and burning the British flag in protest against new sanctions imposed by London.

Britain said it was outraged and warned of "serious consequences." The U.N. Security Council condemned the attacks "in the strongest terms." President Barack Obama said he was disturbed by the incident and called on Iran to hold those responsible to task.

The attacks come at a time of rising diplomatic tension between Iran and Western nations who last week imposed fresh sanctions over Tehran's nuclear program, which they believe is aimed at achieving the capability of making an atomic bomb. **REUTERS**

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Comedian Patrice O'Neal dies

LOS ANGELES. Stand-up comedian Patrice O'Neal died yesterday at the age of 41 following a stroke last month, his agent said.

"It is with terrible sadness we must report that Patrice O'Neal has passed away this morning ... due to the complications of the stroke he suffered on Oct. 19," O'Neal's agent Matt Frost said in a statement. **REUTERS**

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Facebook's years of privacy deceit

Under terms of FTC agreement, social network must be more transparent when making changes to user data

Facebook has agreed to settle an investigation by the Federal Trade Commission into deceptive privacy practices, committing to cease making false claims and to submit to independent audits for 20 years.

The FTC said the world's largest Internet social network had been repeatedly deceptive. For example, Facebook promised users that it would not share personal information with advertisers — but it did, the agency said.

Also, the company failed to warn users that it was changing its website in December 2009 so that certain information that users designated as private, such as their "Friends List," would be made public, the FTC said.

$10B

Facebook is preparing for a initial public stock offering next year, according to a source familiar with the matter. According to the Wall Street Journal, the company might raise $10 billion.

"Facebook's innovation does not have to come at the expense of consumer privacy," FTC Chairman Jon Leibowitz said in a statement.

Under the settlement, which must be approved by an FTC administrative law judge, Facebook is barred from being deceptive in the future about how it uses customers' personal information, and is required to get permission from customers before changing how personal information is shared.

Facebook, with more than 800 million users, has often been criticized for its privacy practices.

The settlement follows a similar agreement in March between the FTC and Google over the Web search leader's rollout of its own social network called Buzz. REUTERS

JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg said in a blog entry yesterday that he is "committed to making Facebook the leader in transparency and control around privacy."

metro MAN AND WOMAN OF THE YEAR 2011

We knew that groups of people would be nominated as much as individuals for Metro's Man and Woman of the Year event, and so it proved yesterday. The 99 percent picked up a lot of nominations, as did the individual Occupy groups in New York, Boston and Philly. But perhaps the most powerful nomination came from Justin Sullivan, who named "the activists of the Arab Spring protesting against greed, corruption, inequality and injustice." Send your nominations with a brief explanation to mwoty@metro.us through Friday, Dec. 9.

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Airline: Travel plans still a go

Despite bankruptcy, American won't leave customers stranded, company says But don't expect good service

The news that American Airlines and its parent company AMR Corporation filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection yesterday may have unnerved some ticket-holders, but it isn't likely to have any impact on year-end vacation plans for those who have booked flights with the airline.

In its bankruptcy announcement, American Airlines noted that it will continue to honor all tickets, reservations and airline miles from customers, and plans to keep offering its signature AAdvantage frequent flier program and Admirals Club memberships.

Quoted

"Because of bad publicity ... the company will probably have a sale." HOBICA

The airline also intends to maintain its normal flight schedules and service routes. Some of this could change in the long term, but in the immediate future, the bankruptcy might actually help American Airlines' customers rather than inconvenience them.

"This has happened so many times before that we know how it usually ends," says George Hobica, a travel expert and founder of Airfarewatchdog.com, referring to other airlines like US Airways and United Airlines that have filed for bankruptcy since the terrorist attacks of 2001 prompted a slowdown in the travel industry.

Hobica predicts that the company may implement promotions like double mile bonuses in order to retain customers.

CONTRIBUTED BY The Street

SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

▶ American Airlines stock plunged about 80 percent on news of its bankruptcy, but the domestic carrier is telling customers it plans on honoring prearranged flight plans.

ANALYSIS

Expect meaner

NEW YORK. In the long term, customers may see the quality of service go down while prices soar.

Much of the reason for American Airlines' decision to file for bankruptcy had to do with its higher-than-average labor costs. Now that the company has filed into Chapter 11, Hobica predicts that pay cuts will be front and center again. As a result, if and when American Airlines emerges from bankruptcy, the company may be leaner but the workers may be meaner.

"The service and morale at the company definitely won't get better," Hobica says.

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YOUTUBE

▶ Social media helped police track down this woman.

Racist rant goes viral; arrest made

LONDON. A video of a woman on a London tram ranting racial abuse at passengers has gone viral after amassing over 2.5 million hits on YouTube. The video has sparked a mass reaction on social media, which led to her arrest.

The original two-and-a-half-minute mobile phone clip, labeled "My Tram Experience," shows a woman — holding a child in her lap — losing her British cool and hurling abusive language at fellow passengers.

"What's this country come to?" she says, looking around the tram. "A lot of black people and a load of f—ing Polish."

The racist rant made an even bigger impact later on social media: the video has already garnered over 78,000 comments, while "#MyTramExperience" was one of the top trending topics on Twitter in Britain yesterday. MWN

Women also think about sex; men esteem food, sleep

Quoted

"There's really no good reason that our society should have believed that men are thinking so much more about sex than women." FISHER

▶ Researchers disprove the myth of the stereotypical male one-track mind ▶ Men have two other tracks! ▶ Women think about sex about half as much

Men think almost as much about food as sex, but they don't think about sex as often as previously believed, a new study reveals.

"Young people don't think about sex as often as the general popular image suggests — the "once every seven seconds" myth is very far off from reality, and the sex differences are not as large as we believe," says Terri Fisher, professor of psychology at Ohio State University and lead author of the study.

She recruited 163 female and 120 male college students between 18 and 25 for the weeklong study. Participants were asked to press a small plastic device every time they thought about sexual stimuli of any kind, fantasies and erotic images. Two control groups recording thoughts of food and sleep were also included.

FIOKLINE

▶ What's she thinking?

It turned out men thought about sex 19 times a day, followed closely by thoughts of sleep at 18 times a day. That is nearly twice as often as the women thought about sex — but men also thought more about both food and sleep. Both sexes were very intrigued to learn how often they thought about all three categories.

Men want more sex when they are young and need more food — that could be one possible reason they think about it more frequently. However, that doesn't account for the sleep factor as they don't need more sleep, says Fisher.

KARIN WASTESON
letters@metro.us
METRO WORLD NEWS IN LONDON

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THE WORD

Metro's **Dorothy Robinson** shares her take on the world of gossip @dorothyatmetro dorothy.robinson@metro.us

The feed ...

▶ Checking in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.

Nathan Fillion is impressed with the Big Apple, Kerry Washington is an animal lover, Helen Hunt is having trouble with Twitter and Alec Baldwin is adjusting his public image.

▶ **@NathanFillion**
New Yorkers, I love how stylish and beautiful you all are. Have lunch with me?

▶ **@kerrywashington**
I'm completely in love... Ive never felt this way before. Ribbon & Cimarron have stolen my heart... They're horses. :)

▶ **@HelenHunt**
Got on twitter to shamelessly promote. Now working and uneasy with shameless promotion. Damn.

▶ **@AlecBaldwin**
I'm going to change my profile to "Conservative, Christian, gun owner, mom."

Kerry Washington

Baby-mama drama stays for the Biebs

Before the illustrious **Mariah Yeater** (that's her mug shot, right, next a photo of **Justin Bieber** looking like **Julie Andrews**) accused Bieber of fathering her child, the last time I wrote about a situation so low-rent, I'm pretty sure it was during the **Levi Johnston** baby-daddy drama with the **Palins**.

The latest on the possible Biebs baby? While the 17-year-old pop star maintains he isn't the father of Yeater's infant son, the man who does claim to be, **Robbie Powell**, was arrested over the weekend in San Diego, according to Hollyscoop. The 23-year-old was charged with possession of methamphetamines and drug paraphernalia, as well as three charges of commercial burglary. Sources say Powell is looking to go public with his claims that Yeater made up the story about Bieber fathering her child, but he hasn't settled on a media outlet yet.

▶ Yeater

▶ Bieber

After all of this, I hope that Bieber is the father just so that poor baby might have a chance at life.

▶ The new face of Gosselin.

Gosselin shoots down plastic surgery rumors

Kate Gosselin (new occupation: blogger at CouponCabin.com, continuing her fame-seeker tendencies) is shooting down Internet rumors that she got a facelift. "With all of the buzz about me having had a facelift, I will confirm that I have not had one (I am only 36!!!). But, I will take all of the talk about how rested and young I look as a compliment! So thanks!" she wrote.

I love Gosselin's "I'm only 36!!!" excuse for not having plastic surgery, as that didn't stop her from getting a tummy tuck in 2007 and breast implants in 2009. But, to be fair, she is 36 and a single mom to eight kids. Girlfriend probably needs all the plastic surgery she can get.

www.metro.us
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DOROTHY ROBINSON'S WORD BLOG

Talking points

Baby No. 2 for Gyllenhaal

Maggie Gyllenhaal and husband **Peter Sarsgaard** are gearing up to welcome another member to their family, as Gyllenhaal is pregnant with their second child, according to Life & Style. "Over Thanksgiving weekend, Maggie was telling friends that she's six months pregnant. Her bump is so big," a source says. "She's thrilled to be pregnant. She and Peter have wanted another child for a while. They're very happy that they'll have another baby in the house soon." The couple, who married in 2009, currently have a 5-year-old daughter, Ramona.

Ritchie opens up about Madge

Guy Ritchie is getting reflective about his marriage to **Madonna**, calling it a "soap opera" in an interview with Details magazine. "I enjoyed my first marriage. It's definitely not something I regret," he says. "But you move on, don't you?" While he cites his children with Madonna as the best and most important thing to come out of their time together, the marriage wasn't without drama. "I stepped into a soap opera, and I lived in it for quite a long period of my life. I'll probably be more eloquent on it 10 years from now," he explains. "I'm quite happy that that experience was accelerated for me. I'm glad I made money, in other words. And I'm glad I got married."

▶ Rebecca Hall

Mendes confirms relationship

Sam Mendes and actress **Rebecca Hall** are officially "in a relationship," a rep for the director confirms to the Daily Mail. It's the first acknowledgment of Mendes being involved since his divorce from **Kate Winslet** last year. At the time of their split, rumors circulated that Mendes was having an affair with Hall, which his rep called "utter nonsense" and "untrue and ridiculous."

Simpson shows off her bump and more ...

1: Jessica Simpson showed off her baby belly as she did some shopping around New York City on Sunday.

2: Bradley Cooper was spotted in Paris, France, yesterday.

3: Neil Patrick Harris and David Burtka attended the Americans for Marriage Equality launch in New York City on Monday.

4: Charlize Theron sported a plunging neckline by Gucci as she attended the Independent Filmmaker Project's 21st annual Gotham Independent Film Awards in NYC on Monday.

5: Betty White visited the "Late Night With Jimmy Fallon" show at Rockefeller Center in New York City on Monday.

6: Marc Jacobs and Victoria Beckham attended the British Fashion Awards 2011 at The Savoy Hotel in London on Monday. The mother of four clinched the coveted Designer Brand of the Year award.

1: ARNALDO MAGNANI/GETTY IMAGES,
2: MARC PIASECKI/FILMMAGIC,
3: JAMES MCCARTHY/GETTY IMAGES,
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'Burning' question

Is it just provocative? There's plenty of sex in Thomas Bradshaw's new play, but what's the point?

Is it real or is it Memorex? It's hard to tell with Thomas Bradshaw's awkward "Burning" at Theatre Row. Telling two seemingly unrelated stories (until an unremarkable revelation proves otherwise), "Burning" jerks between straightforward drama and cartoonish exaggeration in each.

"Burning" is now playing at Theatre Row.
MONIQUE CARBONI

After his mother — with whom he used to share cocaine — dies, 14-year-old Chris (Evan Johnson) is "adopted" by Simon (Danny Mastrogiorgio) and Jack (Andrew Garman). Jack runs the drama program at a high school, which accepts Chris despite a dreadful audition. Chris acts as sex toy and butler for the gay couple until he runs off with Donald (Adam Trese), a writer whose play about a 6-year-old Cambodian prostitute is produced by Simon. It sounds laughable, in a macabre sort of way, but there aren't many laughs.

Meanwhile, Peter (Stephen Tyrone Williams) is an African-American artist with a white wife (Larisa Polonsky). His work is black-themed, but he scrupulously keeps his race secret. He goes to Germany for a gallery show where he meets a neo-Nazi assistant curator (Drew Hildebrand) and a black prostitute (Barrett Doss) to whom he wants to give 20,000 euros.

"Burning" has a penchant for naked bodies copulating onstage and a Playbill cover photo of a black derriere. Perhaps intended to shock, it instead leaves you numb. No amount of simulated sex can breathe life into a play that doesn't know, or at least doesn't care to share, what it is.

MICHAEL BRACKEN

'Burning'
Through Dec. 17
Theatre Row, 410 W. 42nd St.
$61.25, 212-239-6200
www.telecharge.com

TV watch list

CREG GAYNE/FOX
▶ Nikki (Katie Finneran, third from left) and Annie (Jaime Pressly, right) try to punish their daughters Mackenzie (Aisha Dee, second from left) and Sophie (Kristi Lauren, left) on "I Hate My Teenage Daughter."

'I Hate My Teenage Daughter'

COMEDY. There's little to like in this sitcom about two entitled teen girls and their unhip moms desperately trying to live vicariously through their "cool" daughters, who are really just the school's mean girls. Jaime Pressly and Katie Finneran as the best-friend moms deserve better treatment — and material — than this. **Series premiere, 9:30 p.m., Fox**

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FOR MORE OF METRO'S TV COVERAGE

'Christmas in Rockefeller Center'

SPECIAL. The most famous Christmas tree in America gets all decked out for the holidays with a little help from Justin Bieber. **8 p.m., NBC**

'Grammy Nominations Concert Live'

SPECIAL. Lady Gaga, Rihanna and Sugarland are among the performers in this concert/announcement of the music awards' nominees.
10 p.m., CBS AMBER RAY

MTV2 must-see

MTV2 is crowning the kings and queens of hip-hop at the "Sucker Free Awards," airing Sunday at 11 p.m. on MTV2. Held at LIV Fontainebleau Miami Beach, the "Sucker Free Awards" will be anything but traditional with performances by Birdman and Lil Wayne and appearances by Rick Ross, DJ Khaled, Tyler the Creator, Kevin Hart and more. Tell us what you think by tweeting with #SuckerFreeAwards.

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myentertainment

Head of the 'Family'

- Sophia Vergara regularly steals the show as Gloria on 'Modern Family'
- The actress on representing Colombia and her character's canine battle

While she insists she had no comedy background before coming to the United States, Sofia Vergara steals the show among a cast of comedic talents and Emmy winners as Gloria on "Modern Family." It's a part that's catapulted her to fame in the States, meaning more people recognizing her in public — unless she keeps quiet. "As long as I don't speak, I'm safe," she says in her distinct Colombian accent, which is only slightly exaggerated for the show.

How important is it that your character is Colombian? And what do you think about the jokes about Colombia featured in the show?

I love it, I think it's fantastic. You know, Colombians, we don't get offended. It's not like the writers are inventing things about Colombia, you know? It's a reality, what can we do? We just have to laugh about it.

Quoted

"For them to write for a hot Latin woman, I thought it was going to be a problem — but they're great."
SOPHIA VERGARA

Do you like what the writers have done with Gloria?

For them to write for a hot Latin woman, I thought it was going to be a problem, but they're great. At the beginning I was worried. How are they going to know how a Latin woman thinks? They even write my mispronunciations now, they know me so well. Usually they write, "And Gloria says something in Spanish," and they let me say whatever I want. They're not going to tell me what to say in Spanish. And of course I say something that I think is funny.

Do you have any idea what's coming up for Gloria this season?

You don't really know because every episode is a little story, so they don't need to write the thread out until the end. I know what we have filmed these past two months. There's a lot of jealousy between Gloria and Stella the dog. That's the main drama in her life right now, the dog. She hates the dog. And also a little bit of jealousy because of Manny's romantic life.

How does Gloria's relationship with Manny compare to your relationship with your son?

It's very similar. I mean, my son is older now — he's 20 years old. But it's very similar. I love when [people think] he's my brother. He hates it, he wants to throw up in front of the people. Like for example if I'm with him and somebody says, "Oh, tell your sister to come," and I don't correct them, he's like, "Tell them! Tell them you're my mother!"

Sophia Vergara
GETTY IMAGES

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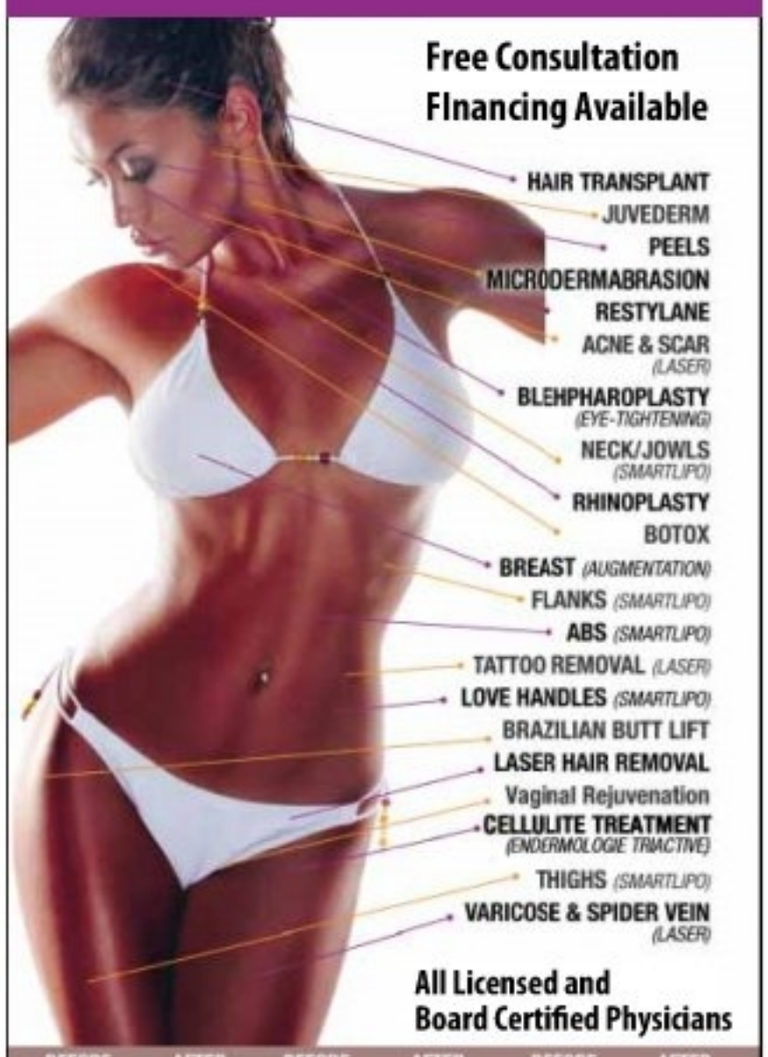

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mytechnology

From Japan, with love

After a rough year, Nintendo cranks out two top-notch games built on franchise favorites The New Super Mario boasts great 3-D effects

"Zelda" is Pixar-quality good.

Sidescroller

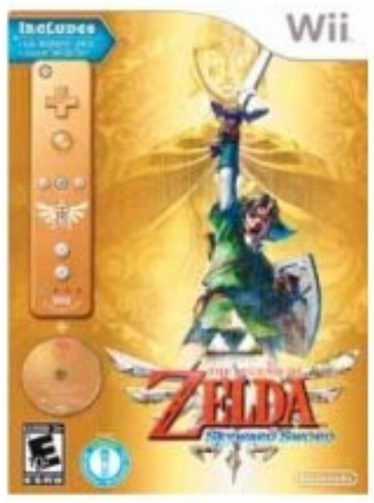
LAWRENCE BONK
LAWRENCE.BONK@METRO.US

If you believe everything you read on the Internet, Nintendo has had a pretty rough year. The 3DS didn't quite meet initial sales expectations and the Wii is about to waggle on up to that great Balance Board in the sky. The haters have forgotten one important thing, though. The company makes better games than just about anybody. Here are reviews of two new classics.

'The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword'

Console: Wii
Grade: ●●●●●

Remember back when the Wii was announced and we couldn't help but imagine all of the cool things we were going to do with it? "Skyward Sword" finally fulfills that dream. The game was built from the ground up for MotionPlus technology, and it shows in just about everything you do. The controls will rarely falter as you swing your sword any way you want to, shoot arrows, bowl bombs and conduct any of the game's dozens of actions.



There's also a stellar game wrapped around the innovative controls. The graphics are charming. The characters and story have the spit shine of a Pixar film. The puzzles are satisfyingly devious. This all combines to make a package that is sure to make you jealous of kids who will be opening this on Christmas morning. Sigh. Childhood.

'Super Mario 3D Land'

Console: Nintendo 3DS
Grade: ●●●●●

People have often wondered if 3-D could be implemented as an actual gameplay device and not just a gimmick. "Super Mario 3D Land" uses the technology to create a moving diorama that tests your jumping and stomping skills more than any game since the days of the SNES.

The game must be played in 3-D to be believed. Trailers and screenshots do not do it justice. You won't be able to wipe the grin off of your face as you blast through its many levels to rescue the hapless Princess Peach. The level design is amazing, and the use of 3-D makes it the perfect game to recapture that "one time" you did acid in college.

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mystyle

THE LONG & SHORT OF IT

Maxi skirts with crop sweaters is our new favorite winter look

Just because we're closing in on December this week, it doesn't mean we have to revert to a winter uniform of jeans. Take your favorite flowy maxi skirt from the summer, pair it with a cropped or shrunken sweater and throw on some wooly tights and flat boots. It's your new chic and cozy cold-weather go-to look.

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Tibi long pleated skirt, $330, www.shopbop.com

2 **Madewell north isles sweater, $85,** www.madewell.com
Marc by Marc Jacobs Georgia printed skirt, $270, www.netaporter.com

3 **Joe fresh blue sweater, $49,** www.joefresh.com
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Style pick

Meet Amie, the shoe we really want

Those who prefer stilettos and platforms might want to rethink their allegiance after laying eyes on these.

Italy-based designer Chrissie Morris is known for her towering, show-stopping, Art Deco heels; but her foray into flats, Amie, is a pieced together beauty made of leopard print ponyhair and stingray that makes a strong case for staying closer to the ground.

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mykids

Nightmares, tantrums, lies: The joys of parenting

Twice the advice

KERRY & JACQUELINE DONELLI
TTAMETRO@GMAIL.COM

– Kerry and Jacqueline Donelli are twin sisters and filmmakers of the comedy "Titillating Steven." They are pursuing a master's degree and then a doctorate in Mental Health Counseling in NYC.

Dear Twins,
My son seems to have at least one horrible nightmare a week. Do you think he experienced some sort of traumatic event that I don't know about? I try to let him sleep in my bed a few nights a week to avoid having these nightmares.
– Signed, Scaredy pants

Kerry says: More often than not nightmares are not a cause for concern. Studies show that about 40 percent of children between 5-12 experience nightmares. What can you do? When he is experiencing nightmares, speak to him in a soft, calming voice. Explain that he is having a bad dream. Encourage him to discuss it.

Jacqueline says: If your child's nightmares become frequent enough to disturb sleep patterns to a degree that interferes with his daily life, call a pediatrician. Don't let your child get in the habit of sleeping in your bed! This sends the message that his room is unsafe.

Dear Twins,
My husband and I are expecting another baby in a few months. I'm worried about how my 4-year-old will handle it. She's been the center of attention until now, and pretty soon she will have to share the spotlight. Any suggestions?
– Signed, No sibling rivalry

Kerry says: Explain in advance that another baby will be joining the family. Reassure her that you'll always love her just the same but that you will need to give the newborn lot of time and attention. Let her know that she can help out as much as she wants.

Jackie says: I agree. I also suggest that you and your child begin reading books together about having a new baby. Try practicing what baby care will be like with a doll.

Dear Twins,
My best friend's 5-year-old daughter lies all the time! She tells these ridiculous lies to her mother, and I'm worried about the effect this is all having on my own daughter. I tell my friend that she is doing a disservice her daughter by not challenging the lies, but my friend insists it's harmless and she'll grow out of it.
– Signed, Sick of all the lying

Jacqueline says: Teach your child why it is important to tell the truth. Talk with her about other ways that you will deal with mistakes so that she knows not to be afraid to be honest. And let her know that you are pleased when you hear her telling the truth.

Kerry says: Tell the truth yourself. This includes not breaking promises to your child, because to her that seems like telling a lie.

Dear Twins,
My 2-year-old has temper tantrums constantly! I can't seem to stop him from behaving this way no matter what I try. I find I just lose my cool and yell. *– Signed, Want to scream myself*

Jacqueline says: You don't want to lose your cool. When your child is in this state, he's unable to listen to reason. Just sit down with him while he's having his tantrum, hold him. He will calm down more quickly and find your embrace comforting. After he calms down, talk about what happened.

Kerry says: I say don't give in to unreasonable demands of your screaming child. By conceding, you'll only be teaching your child that pitching a fit is the way to get what he wants. If you're in a public place, I suggest you leave with your child until he gets a grip.

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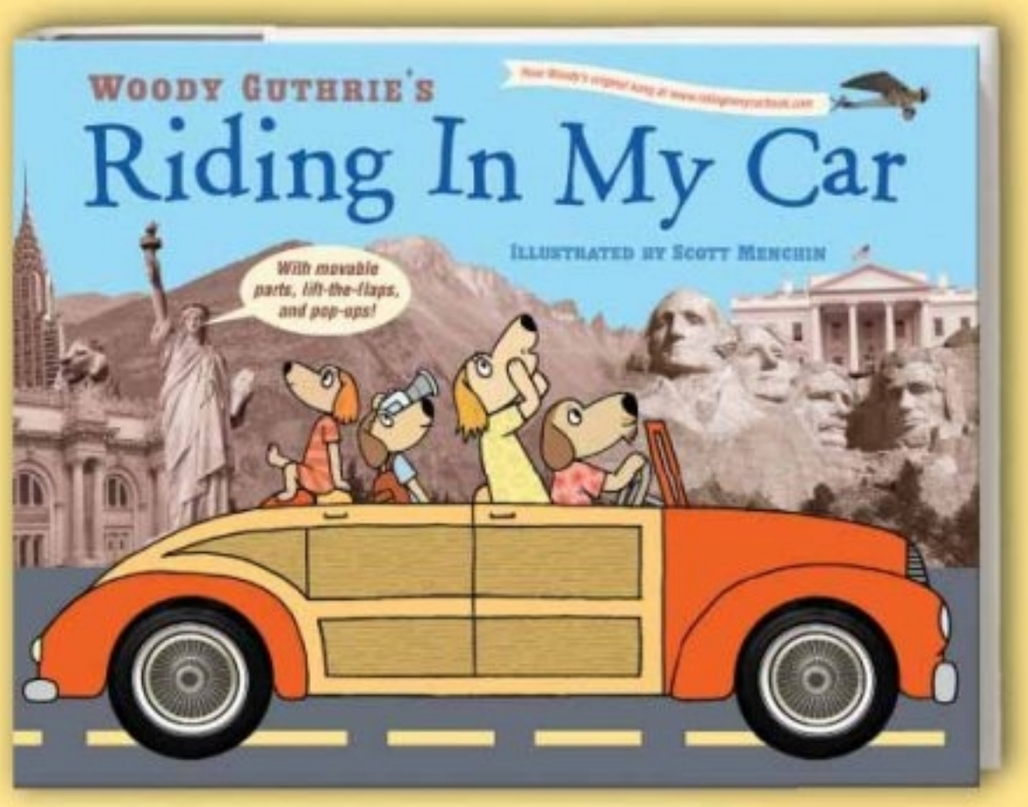

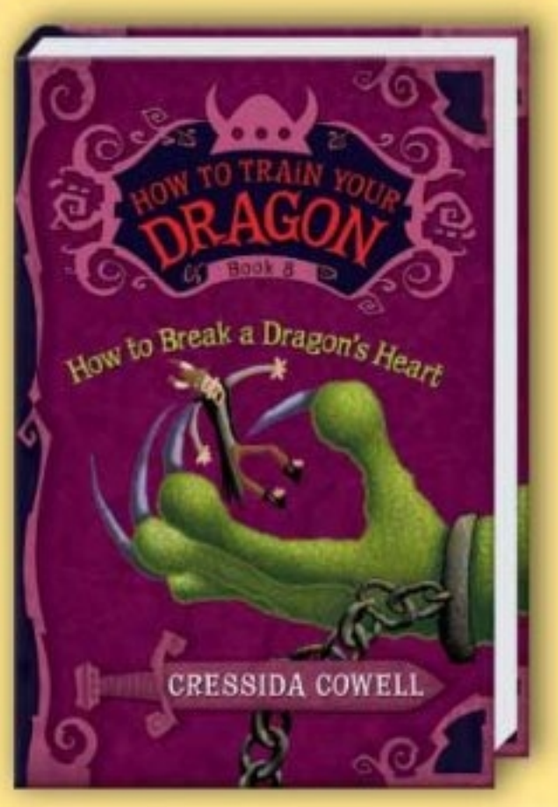

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Rebecca *at* **212.263.4684** *or* **langer06@nyumc.org**
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NYU Child Study Center
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AboutOurKids.org

How to explain

Few parents can get away from Santa Claus Is there any harm in playing along? And when are children ready to hear the truth?

▶ Who is this Santa Claus guy anyway?

Imagine you're 3 years old, and a fat, bearded man in a red suit starts laughing in your face. You'd be confused. Scared. And you'd probably run to mommy. So when and how do you tell your child about who, exactly, this man is?

They should be ready to understand the background story of Father Christmas at about age three, says Dr. Jerome Singer, professor emeritus of psychology and child study at Yale University and a specialist in children's imagination. "Before that it's confusing to the child. At 3, 4 and 5 years, children are doing a great deal of pretending and make believe anyway."

"At 3, 4 and 5 years, children are doing a great deal of pretending anyway."
JEROME SINGER, PSYCHOLOGIST

Either way, you can't escape the myth. "If your children go to school and are part of mainstream society, then it's hard to see how you can avoid it," says clinical psychologist and author Oliver James. "At age 2, 3 and 4, children are living a wild fantasy life already. The idea that there is a big man flying around the world giving gifts shouldn't be a hard sell," he says.

Parents shouldn't worry about participating in the great red-and-white lie. "Lying is an integral part of life from an early age; children witness parents saying 'tell him I'm not in'," says James. "So there's nothing too complicated about that."

In fact, fantasizing about Santa's adventures could benefit a child's cognitive development. "There are many advantages for the child developing relatively early a capacity for pretending and imagination," says Singer. Children with active imaginations at an early age learn new vocabularies, master the idea of possibilities by experimenting with different social situations, trying them out and seeing what works and what doesn't, so they learn to self-regulate, he explains.

Communicate with your kids in a playful way about

Metro Santa survey

AT WHAT AGE DID YOU TELL YOUR KIDS THAT SANTA DOESN'T EXIST?

Santa

the Santa myth, says Singer, and be alert to factors that will confuse them, including different Santas appearing in shops and on TV. Most kids find out the truth from siblings or at school. Don't push kids who want to believe but prepare them for the truth as they hit early school age.

EMMA E. FORREST
METRO WORLD NEWS IN LONDON

Analysis

Give christmas meaning

OLIVER JAMES, AUTHOR OF "AFFLUENZA"

Oliver James, author of "Affluenza," a book about how our competitive consumerist culture makes us anxious, suggests ways to give Christmas a noncommercial meaning:

▶ **Create games, rituals and traditions**
Find a film that the family can watch together, "The Sound of Music" or "Casablanca," and watch it every year, creating rituals away from the consumption of gifts.

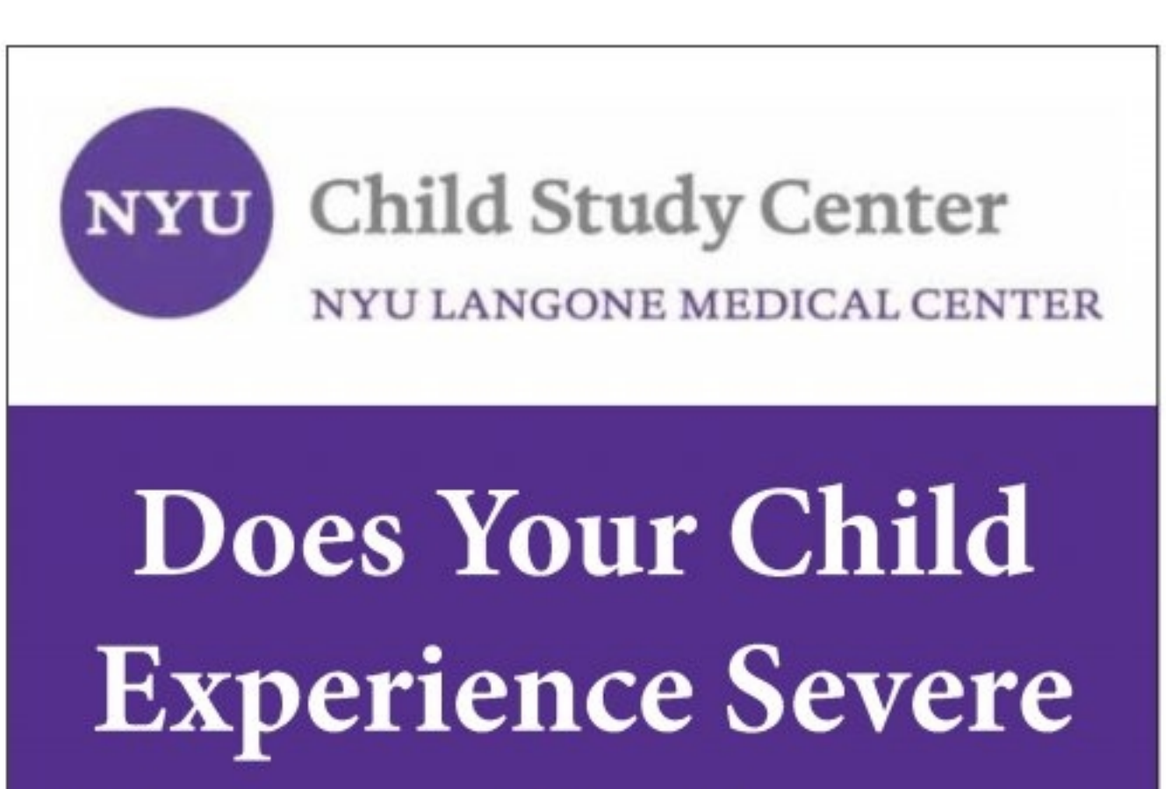
▶ **Reinforce anti-materialism**
Remind your kids that money and possessions aren't going to make them happy, throughout the year, and that richer people aren't necessarily happier.

▶ **Make them ad-savvy**
Kids love impressing you with their cleverness. Teach them how to decrypt the ads that try to sell them products they don't need throughout the year — or let them watch advert-spoofing "The Simpsons" — and they'll be wary come December.

▶ The hills are alive

NYU Child Study Center
NYU LANGONE MEDICAL CENTER

Does Your Child Experience Severe Temper Outbursts?



Free evaluations of children ages 5-9 are available as part of a brain imaging research study.

Participation is voluntary & compensation is provided.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Rachel *at* 212.263.3692

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ARE YOU NORMAL?

Metro's resident psychotherapist, Jonathan Alpert, is back with another round of answers to your questions

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JONATHAN ALPERT
WWW.JONATHANALPERT.COM

My husband sleeps all day. Is that normal?

It's normal only if he works the night shift; otherwise sleeping all day could be a sign of a problem — emotionally or physically. He should discuss it with his doctor. Sleeping all day can also be a side effect of depression, in which case he should seek help as well.

I feel sad all the time. Is that normal?

No, it's not normal. Sadness is a normal emotion; however, it's not so normal when it is how you feel "all the time." Seek help and try to identify the cause of the sadness. Figure out what's missing in your life and what troubles you. Most importantly, work with someone to figure out what would make you more content in life.

GOODSHOOT

▶ Too much sleep is not a good sign.

HEALTH. METRO.US
FOR MORE OF METRO'S HEALTH COVERAGE

*– **Jonathan Alpert** is a licensed psychotherapist. E-mail him your questions at **jonathan@jonathanalpert.com***

Metro does not endorse the opinions of the author, or any opinions expressed on its pages.

I worry incessantly about body odor and bad breath. Is this normal?

To "worry incessantly" isn't normal. To be concerned about such health issues is. Could there be a reason to devote more concern to this issue than one should? Perhaps someone once pointed out that your odor was offensive and that comment stung. The remedy to such fears and concerns is to take action. See a dentist if you're truly concerned about bad breath, and take measures to ensure that you smell fresh: Use the right deodorant and soap, and practice good hygiene.

DIGITAL VISION

▶ That's one stinky problem.

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I have corns on my toes which get thicker no matter what shoes I wear.

My toes aren't straight- they are all bent and rotated.

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mywellbeing

Strike a pose

Yoga pose of the week: Seated forward bend/ Paschimottanasana

▶ Your torso will oscillate and lengthen almost imperceptibly when you breathe.

1 Sit on the floor with your buttocks supported on a folded blanket and your legs straight in front of you. Press actively through your heels.

2 Draw the inner groins deep into the pelvis. Inhale — and keeping the front torso long, lean forward from the hip joints, not the waist. Lengthen the tailbone away from the back of your pelvis. Take the sides of the feet with your hands, thumbs on the soles, elbows fully extended (elbows are straight, not bent).

3 When you are ready to go further, don't forcefully pull yourself into the forward bend. Lengthen the front torso into the pose, keeping your head raised.

4 With each inhalation, lift and lengthen the front torso slightly; with each exhalation, release a little more fully into the bend.

5 Stay in the pose anywhere from one to three minutes.

To come up, lift the torso away from the thighs. Inhale and lift the torso up by pulling the tailbone down and into the pelvis. METRO

– Pose courtesy of Stephanie Knutsson, Bodyism Yoga instructor

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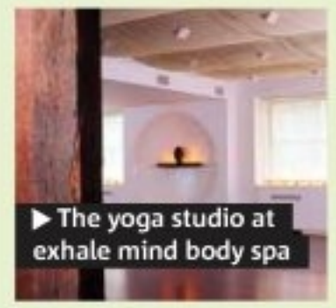
▶ The yoga studio at exhale mind body spa

Exhale for a good cause

This Friday at 4 p.m., exhale mind body spa is hosting a book signing by Elena Ladas and Dr. Kara Kelly, the authors of "Integrative Strategies for Cancer Patients: A Practical Resource for Managing the Side Effects of Cancer Therapy," followed by a 90-minute Body Mantra yoga class. There's also a book signing after the class if you can't make it at 4. A $50 donation is suggested, with all proceeds going to Columbia University's Integrative Therapies Program for cancer patients. METRO/ME

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Letters

letters@metro.us

OWS: Veterans and the vote

RE: "THANKFUL OR NOT? OCCUPY": Miriam Davidovich thinks we should thank "the soldiers who put their lives on the line to protect the U.S." There are many veterans in the OWS movement and more than 200 Veterans for Peace supporting the protests. The so-called "War on Terror" has done nothing but increase the risks for the 99 percent.
JAMES E. VAN LOOY, VIA E-MAIL

I have been a part of Wall Street for 28 years; I worked my way up, put myself through school without relying on my parents. We need to stop arguing over who is right or wrong and start focusing on how we can fix the problems before we get to a point of no return. Bickering between the Republicans and Democrats is a waste of time. The political process needs direction — that's our collective voice, not OWS or the Republican party or any other venue.
MICHAEL PALAMARO, VIA E-MAIL

Let's focus on the real issues

RE: "CAIN: NEW ACCUSER ON THE WAY": What is the big deal about Herman Cain's private life? Most men including one or two on that stage with him have done the same things. It's sad that this is what people zone in on, rather than the real problems with Republican policies. These people are extreme radicals, not conservatives as they bill themselves.
PAUL SIMONS, VIA E-MAIL

Shopping won't fix Wall Street

We hear much about how our holiday shopping will help the economy. This is a lot of hogwash repeated every holiday season. The damage done to our economy by the federal government will never be repaired by a few billion dollars of consumer spending. This media blitz of disinformation is done to conceal the work of the spend-a-holics ruling over us from Washington D.C.
FRANK ST. GEORGE, EAST ROCKAWAY

On language: Keep it honest

RE: "BASIC RESPECT: COMMON SENSE": Rep. Bachmann should be judged by the content of her character. She is a well-documented liar. What's more, she secures her political power through pandering to bigots. But is it appropriate to imply that this vile, degenerate, hypocritical, heartless, pettifogging enabler is a b—? This liberal says no. **CARLTON SEWELL, VIA E-MAIL**

E-mail your letters: **letters@metro.us**
Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words. Metro reserves the right to edit all letters. Please include your name and contact information.

Horoscope

♐ Sagittarius **Nov. 23-Dec. 21.** Put your analytical skills to work so that you don't overlook any situation that could produce something that would be a huge advantage.
♑ Capricorn **Dec. 22-Jan. 19.** Be firm but also fair when it comes to any financial dealings. Don't feel obligated to give more than your share when you know you won't be compensated for it in any way.
♒ Aquarius **Jan. 20-Feb. 19.** A lesson might be learned from a negative experience that you may have to endure. As long as what happens to you isn't wasted, it will be worth the unpleasantness.
♓ Pisces Feb. **20-March 20.** Keep to yourself any ambitious undertaking that you are contemplating. Don't expose your intentions until you know you can pull if off.
♈ Aries **March 21-April 19.** Try to include in your business meetings an associate who has been a frequent presence. With this person's vast experience, she or he may have many unique things to offer.
♉ Taurus **April 20-May 20.** It'll be your effectiveness, not your flamboyance, that gets the attention and wins the respect of others. Just the hard, cold facts will do.
♊ Gemini **May 21-June 20.** Help a disagreeable old friend to look for the good in people instead of always dwelling on what's wrong. It's just a bad habit, and life can be a whole lot nicer if they learn to brighten up.
♋ Cancer **June 21-July 22.** If you can keep your mind riveted on the results that everyone desires, it will help overcome any obstacles that might periodically get in the way. Don't let anything impede you.
♌ Leo **July 23-Aug. 22.** Concentrate on and emphasize the facts, not the frills when trying to present a case to others. Doing so would help sway to your cause the people whose help you need.
♍ Virgo **Aug. 23-Sept. 22.** Get your mind off all the small details and focus on a profitable purpose as a whole. Once you do, everything else will automatically fall into place.
♎ Libra **Sept. 23-Oct. 23.** Your peers recognize that you have the leadership abilities to steer everyone through what might be a difficult situation. Take the reins and guide them through the maze.
♏ Scorpio **Oct. 24-Nov. 22.** An opportunity, albeit of a limited nature, will present itself to you through the offices of a grateful person you assisted in the past.
BERNICE BEDE OSOL

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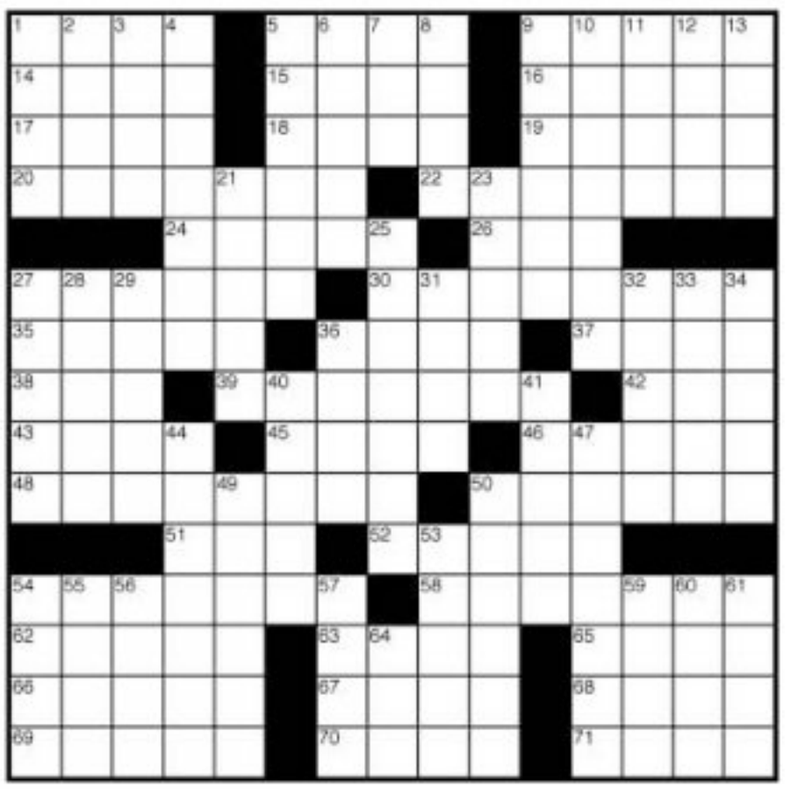
FOR MORE GAMES & PUZZLES

Across
1 Rude person
5 "Hawkeye" Pierce
9 Stock or bond
14 Hideous giant
15 Dread
16 Game of chance
17 Frog step
18 Scholarly org.
19 Romance, in Rome
20 Flooded
22 Removed paint
24 Slow times
26 Heating fuel
27 Degraded
30 Jonquils
35 Horses' hair
36 Crimson Tide nickname
37 Lost fur
38 Novelist __ Rand
39 Take by surprise
42 Feel awful
43 College credit
45 Slugger's stats
46 Ben on "Bonanza"
48 Very early civilization
50 Chance happenings
51 Rapper Tone __
52 NASA outfit (hyph.)
54 Bar sing-along
58 May birthstone
62 Spew ash
63 Dingy
65 Writer __ Seton
66 Part of tinting hair
67 Breathing organ
68 Yardstick
69 Had some standing
70 Leisure
71 Type of sock

Down
1 Adventurous
2 Kind of molding
3 Kind of hygiene
4 Beat back
5 In the countryside
6 Tennis great Ivan __
7 "__ Rheingold"
8 Diploma word
9 He captured Rome
10 East Africans
11 Quit
12 Be, to Henri
13 __ the line (obeyed)
21 Conjecture
23 Kind of reef
25 Trapping
27 Bombay nannies
28 Cajun's home
29 Per __ (yearly)
31 Qtys.
32 "Jaws" menace
33 Trawler net
34 Runs in neutral
36 Ali who said "Open sesame!"
40 Dupe
41 Ewing matriarch
44 Setback
47 Have more status
49 Cheered
50 Grope about
53 Zoo clowns
54 "Quo Vadis" co-star
55 Libretto feature
56 Undersized pup
57 Beat by a whisker
59 Erelong
60 Orpheus' harp
61 Judi Dench, for one
64 Estuary



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		2				4	3	
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6	1		9	2	4		7	
				7				8

SUDOKU **LEVEL: EASY**

6			5	4		9	1	
				7		4		
	1			9			8	5
				6	9		2	3
4	2		8	1				
5	8			3			9	
		2		8				
	4	3		2	7			8

SUDOKU **LEVEL: HARD**

Solution to yesterday's crossword

How to play Sudoku: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS: **WWW.METRO.US/PUZZLES**

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Rangers hang on against Pens

Henrik Lundqvist made 24 saves to lead the Rangers to a 4-3 win over the Pittsburgh Penguins on Wednesday night at the Garden.

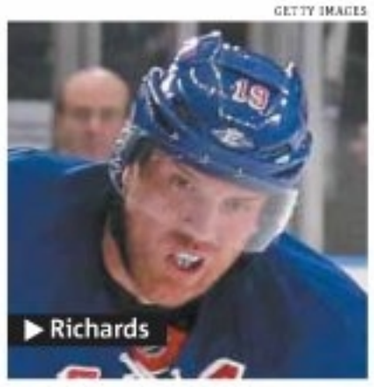
Ryan Callahan, John Mitchell, Brad Richards and Marian Gaborik scored for the Rangers, while James Neal, Evgeni Malkin and Pascal Dupuis scored for Pittsburgh.

The Rangers have won three in a row. Pittsburgh is 3-2-0 in the five games since Sidney Crosby's return.

Pacifists need not apply as the match had an edge from the start. The tone was set 16 seconds in when Sean Avery and Tyler Kennedy wrested at center ice. After their two-minute minors for roughing had expired, Avery and Kennedy fought at center ice. Two minutes and twenty one seconds had expired and Avery and Kennedy had seven penalty minutes each.

Richards increased the Rangers' lead to 3-1 in the second when he whipped a shot over Marc-Andre Fleury's glove. When Gaborik shoveled a rebound over Fleury's right pad at 18:26, it completed the Rangers' four goal outburst in a span of 10:25.

GETTY IMAGES



▶ Richards

DENIS GORMAN
sports@metro.us

Shhh ... don't use that word

You know it is on every Giants player's mind, but 'collapse' is a dirty word around facility Coughlin: 'There's no connection to past teams'

RONALD MARTINEZ/GETTY IMAGES

▶ The Giants were humiliated in New Orleans and now they return home to face the defending champion Packers.

As much as Giants head coach Tom Coughlin loathes the topic, even he can't avoid the deluge of questions concerning yet another late-season collapse.

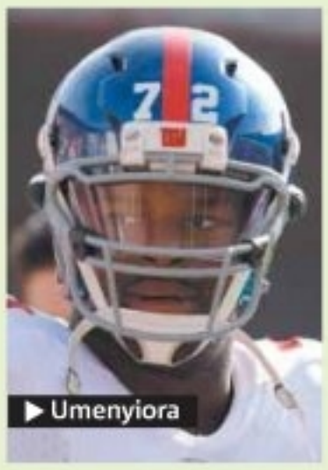
"Everything is different, every circumstance is different. I know you'll continue to bring it up, and you're welcome to do it, but I'm not stuck on it as much as you [the media]," Coughlin said. "I'm more interested in knowing how you lose a game. I'm sure our team is aware of this, but we talk about staying focused. The schedule being what it is, the opportunities diminish and we're aware of that. But there's no connections between [past and current] teams."

Following Monday's lopsided loss in New Orleans, the Giants (6-5) lost their grip on first place in the NFC East and now sit one game behind Dallas. About the only good thing that comes with New York's brutal stretch is they have two games remaining against the Cowboys (7-4).

Coughlin would have none of the talk about a future collapse and the misfortunes of teams past because he said he was too busy worrying about the present.

The Giants have once again put themselves in a precarious position and like last year's breakdown it began with a late-season loss to the Eagles.

TONY WILLIAMS
sports@metro.us



▶ Umenyiora

Osi may be out vs. Pack

They key to beating the Packers will likely be getting pressure on MVP candidate Aaron Rodgers. That may have just gotten a lot harder for the Giants.

Defensive end Osi Umenyiora left Monday's game against New Orleans in the first half with a sprained ankle and didn't return.

Head coach Tom Coughlin had no further update yesterday, except to say Umenyiora was being checked out at the Hospital for Special Surgery, where the Giants send any injured player for tests. METRO

7-9

The Giants are 7-9 in the second half of their last two seasons — 4-4 in 2010 and 3-5 in 2009. They missed the playoffs both times. They are already off to a 0-3 start in the second half this year.

Good day, bad day

Bobby Valentine
Yankees fans you have a new manager to hate ... sort of.

Bobby Valentine, the old manager for the Mets, was hired as the new manager of the Red Sox yesterday.

It gives you a nice opportunity to recycle your hatred stored up from past Subway Series.

Ndamukong Suh
The Detroit defensive tackle learned his punishment yesterday and he'll be sitting for two games without pay.

Suh stomped on a Lions offensive lineman during Thursday's game against Green Bay.

He is appealing the decision.

FINALLY TIME TO GET EXCITED FOR THE NBA

Opinion

JASON McINTYRE
SPORTS@METRO.US

Leave it to the NBA to solve its four-plus-months lockout at 3:30 a.m. on a Saturday morning. If an NBA lockout ends, but nobody is awake to get the news, does it really happen?

The NBA was briefly in the news after the 139-day lockout ended Saturday morning, but then the public spent the rest of the day raking leaves and consuming college football. Everyone did the same Sunday, except the sport on TV was pro football.

The lockout has been over for days now, and nobody's frothy about the season. I'm here to change that. Here are four reasons to be giddy about the shortened, 66-game 2011-2012 NBA season:

▶ **Jan Vesely's debut, but more importantly, his girlfriend**: The Washington Wizards drafted a rail thin, 21-year-old, 6-foot-11 Czech. When he was announced at the draft, he stood up with his girlfriend and everyone took notice. She quickly became Internet famous. She's about 6-foot-8 and don't rule out her appearing in the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit issue. The Wizards will surely do their best to make sure she's at most games.

The lovely Helen Lindes

Quoted

"I'll take the Thunder to win the NBA championship."

▶ **Chris Paul, Dwight Howard and Deron Williams**: The trio are all among the 15 best players in the NBA and are all likely to be on the move either during the season or at the end of it. Chris Paul seems to want to play in New York. (New Yorkers would be in the same boat.) Dwight Howard just wants to play for a contender (the Magic have faded badly the last two years). Deron Williams could lure Howard to New Jersey, soon-to-be Brooklyn. We do have a given: At least one of these guys ends up playing for the Lakers.

▶ The **Dallas Mavericks** are the center of the Universe. But not in the way you think. Yes, they won the title last year, and are poised to repeat (good luck without Tyson Chandler). More importantly, two of their players have ties to Miss Universe contestants. **Rudy Fernandez** is dating Helen Lindes, aka Miss Spain 2000 (second runner-up in the Miss Universe competition). **JJ Barea** is engaged to Zuleyka Rivera (Miss Universe, 2006).

▶ **Angry Kevin Durant**: One of the biggest NBA stories this summer was that clean-cut scoring machine Kevin Durant is heavily tatted-up. He took off his jersey at a game in China and his entire chest was full of ink. The media referred to them as "business tattoos." This led people to believe Durant has an edge and is not to be trifled with. I'll take the Thunder to win the title.

– Jason Raj McIntyre covers athletes off the field and runs the popular blog, The Big Lead.

Metro does not endorse the opinions of the author, or any opinions expressed on its pages. Opposing viewpoints are welcome. Send 300-word submissions to letters@metro.us.

Jags axe coach Del Rio

If only they'd drafted Tim Tebow.

Jacksonville head coach Jack Del Rio was fired yesterday after his team got off to a 3-8 start behind rookie quarterback Blaine Gabbert.

Del Rio took over in 2003 from now Giants head coach Tom Coughlin and had some amount of success with the team.

His overall record was 69-73, but the team made two playoff appearances under his direction.

Many fans had hoped Del Rio would bring in Tebow, a Florida native, in the 2010 draft, but they drafted Tyson Alualu 10th overall instead.

The Jaguars also announced the team was put up for sale, and purchased by Shahid Khan. METRO

HAIR LOSS?
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Granderson talks new CBA

SAM YEH/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Granderson recently returned from a trip to Taiwan with a group of MLB All-Stars.

Yankees center fielder, player rep talks new collective bargaining deal
Unlike other leagues, negotiations went smoothly Favored HGH test

Curtis Granderson hit 41 home runs during the regular season and then hit a few more Monday during a wiffle ball home run derby at PS 19 in the Woodlawn section of the Bronx.

The good news for Yankee and baseball fans is Granderson and other home run hitters will be doing their hitting for the next five years in relative labor peace.

While the NFL and NBA experienced lengthy lockouts this year, MLB quietly agreed to a five-year collective bargaining agreement last week. The official announcement occurred shortly before — and within walking distance — of where the NBA lockout ended 4 a.m. Saturday morning.

Granderson served as the Yankees player representative last season and has been involved with the union since 2006. He spoke publicly for the first time about the new deal after helping the school dedicate its refurnished schoolyard and raise $1,500 for its health and nutrition program.

"Throughout the course of the season, we started negotiations in February or March and I think the fact that we were able to get the ball going on those ends, it knocked out a lot of big pieces early on," Granderson said. "It definitely helped out a lot."

Granderson is part of a group of player reps that helped baseball avoid a work stoppage for the third straight time an agreement expired. The closest was August 2002, but in the wake of Sept. 11, players and owners realized what a nightmare labor strife can be and have gone 16 years without labor problems after having eight previous disputes.

"A lot of sides wanted to see the deal done in the World Series, but there were some things we had to work out. But I think it was a matter of finally realizing that what everybody [needed to do] was move forward and keep the game going."

LARRY FLEISHER
sports@metro.us

HGH testing

Besides new luxury tax rules, human growth hormone testing is one of the biggest changes.

"I'm happy to go ahead and keep everything clean even as much as we can," **Granderson said.** "There really isn't 100 percent proof on exactly what it does but if people feel it does give them an advantage and if there is a way that it is, then we definitely want to go ahead and find a way to keep it out."

36
It is Boeheim's 36th season as head coach and 44th as a member of the staff.

28
Boeheim has taken the Orange to 28 NCAA tournaments and three title games.

Syracuse's Boeheim gets vote of confidence

If Syracuse chancellor Nancy Cantor is the final arbiter then longtime head coach Jim Boeheim won't be going anywhere soon.

Cantor spoke to reporters for the first time after a school economic development conference yesterday, saying "Coach Boeheim is our coach."

Boeheim, who took over as head coach of the Orange in 1976, had been called on to re-sign, or be fired, in the wake of molestation allegations made against his assistant coach Bernie Fine.

Fine was fired on Sunday after ESPN disclosed a telephone call between Fine's wife Laurie and one of the accusers, Bobby Davis, in which she admits to knowing about her husband's crimes.

Fine started as Boeheim's assistant when he took over in 1976. Boeheim won his only national championship in 2003. METRO

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Market watch

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333 E. 85th St.
The cheapest property to hit the market this week is a second-floor studio at 333 E. 85th St. This 300-square-foot co-op with southern exposures and a low maintenance cost of $550 per month is listed by Empire State Properties for $242,500.

PRICIEST
$12.9M
1000 Park Ave.
The most expensive property listed this week is a five-bedroom co-op at 1000 Park Ave. This pre-war apartment with Southern City views and 4,400 square feet is listed by Sloane Square for $12.9M.

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Design expert Deborah Needleman shows us how to add style, glam and fun to our less-than-perfect rentals Start by losing the overhead lighting

For those of us still mourning the loss of Domino magazine — or, sure, snuggling up to prized old copies, desperate for decorating ideas and inspiration — there's good news. Deborah Needleman, the brains behind our favorite shelter mag and current editor-in-chief of WSJ Magazine, has a new design bible for us to pore over. And, unlike the

... let's just say "aspirational" pages of Domino, "The Perfectly Imperfect Home" is packed with creative and affordable ways to make your abode chic, comfy and happy. Here, Needleman shares tips renters can do to make home feel like, well, home.

TINA CHADHA
tina.chadha@metro.us

Paint!

"Bite the bullet and paint your apartment. Even if your landlord is not going to pay for it, it's really worth it. A nice color is so much better than that awful [standard] yellowy white."

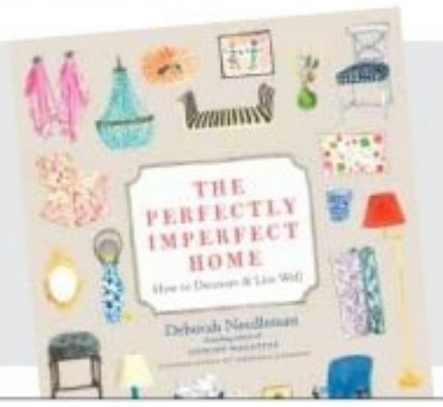
ILLUSTRATIONS: VIRGINIA JOHNSON

Create a foyer

"It's important, especially in small apartments where things get messy very quickly, to have some place where you can deal with your mail. You can either have a skinny shelf or a narrow console where you put books, your bag, a bowl to toss your mail into it. If you don't have any kind of entrance, you can use a nice dresser to put your scarves, dog leash and pens in the drawers and then have baskets on it for your mail, keys, lipstick and whatever."

Happy touches

"[One] thing that I talk about in the book is 'Jollifiers.' When you are starting out you don't have great stuff, you don't have a lot of stuff, so it really helps to have a few things around that are sentimental and make you happy to look at — like a picture that you love and you just blow up really big, or my friend Rita Konig had this big poster that said the word 'love' on it. There's just something about when you look at the word 'love' or 'yes!' you just feel better and that is supercool."



Ditch the overhead lights

"The main thing is lighting. In a rental [lighting] is pretty awful because it's usually one powerful overhead light. If the light is harsh it's kind of a style crusher. So it's worth either ignoring that light and getting lamps, or spending a little bit of money and changing that fixture out to something more flattering. I have in my apartment a giant rice paper globe [shade] — probably the cheapest solution there is. I think they are so pretty and they are, like, $10."

Ottomans rule

"I'm a huge fan of the ottoman. It's just a good, versatile piece of furniture that serves as both a chair when you have friends over and a coffee table when you need it to be."

Out-of-the-box storage

"Storage is always a huge issue in small apartments. I think covering a table with a piece of fabric is really pretty and lets you bring in a bit of color, and there's storage underneath.

I also don't think those giant plastic containers are acceptable. I feel too many people have those out and it's this idea that 'I need storage.' Well, too bad — it's too ugly. I say baskets, baskets, baskets — for papers, for linens, for offseason clothes that you're going to stick under your bed, for sticking in the shelves and putting your scarves in. They look great."

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Changes in the skyline

While the economy may have seen a modest recovery, new condo construction has remained dormant
We explore some reasons why

In the heyday of NYC real estate, the skyline was dominated by towering cranes and rising megaprojects. While the number of construction permits in the first half of 2011 rose 12 percent over last year, according to data from the city's Department of Buildings, a laundry list of 631 stalled projects remains arrested by continued economic unrest.

Construction financing is still the biggest hurdle facing developers, explains Stephen Kliegerman, Executive Director of Terra Project Marketing. "Being able to make the banks feel comfortable with large projects and their ability to be absorbed into the marketplace is a challenge, and there is a lack of developable land that could support large-scale complexes."

For those that have financing in place, construction costs have risen at a faster pace than in past years — up 3.55 percent in 2011 according to Engineering News-Record's Building Cost Index. This has made larger projects harder to justify, making developers tend toward smaller buildings and conversions.

Nevertheless, all hope is not lost, as a few new projects promise to change the Manhattan skyline. Here's a look at what you can expect to see climbing upwards in the next two years.

JARED KLEINSTEIN
letters@metro.us

One57 sits at the top

Extell Development's 1,005-foot Park Hyatt/Condo residence project at 57th Street and Sixth Avenue is by far the most talked-about new development in years, as it will rise as the tallest residential building in the Western Hemisphere upon completion in 2013. This 13-year-in-the-making behemoth is already past its 27th floor, and the penthouses are rumored to be priced at $98 million.
www.one57.com

No timeline

While no one is sure when they'll be finished, two other buildings stand out for their unique designs and plans to rise higher than any others have in the city.

Torre Verre
Planned height: 1,050 feet
432 Park Ave.
Planned height: 1,300 Feet

Rentals on the West Side

Hells Kitchen residents can look forward to progress into phase two at the Mercedes House, Two Trees Management's 900-unit rental complex at 53rd and 11th that saw runaway success with its first exposure to the market in 2011. While the building is well on its way to its 29-story goal, real estate lovers will be able to watch a new monster rise nearby on 45th Street, as the Gotham Organization broke ground recently on a 1,238-unit rental megaplex to be finished in 2014.
www.mercedeshouseny.com

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